

Advocacy and Lobbying Training

The Hague, 13-19 October 2015

Participant Profiles

In this booklet are the profiles of the dynamic individuals that took part in the Diaspora Academy Project's Second Lobbying and Advocacy training workshop in October 2015.



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Acknowledgements

This profile was written by DAP Project Associates Yusra Medani and Maren Renner under the leadership of Connie Formson-Lorist, ADPC Programme Coordinator. In putting together this profile, the objective is to showcase the work that our training participants are involved in, and how by attending the Lobbying and Advocacy training they will become even more effective.

ADPC would also like to acknowledge the professional and efficient contributions of Emmely Benschop and Nienke Vermeulen of The Hague Academy for Local Governance and Babah Tarawally who all served as resource persons for the training. This booklet is only possible because of the nine dynamic individuals who took time off their busy schedule to take part in the second Lobby and Advocacy training workshop of 19-23 October 2015. Your enthusiastic and dynamic contributions were invaluable in making the training workshop the success it was -Thank You! In alphabetical order these individuals are:

Alain Vital Biziiman
Blessing Sunday Osuchukwu
Charles Mutitu
Chiemeka Peace Nwosu
Denis Onyango
Dorottya Patay
Foday Bangura
Mathias Nigatu
Tsfaldet Okubayes

ADPC would like to acknowledge the financial contributions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and the Gemeente Den Haag. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that it is through the vision and strategic direction of ADPC's Founder and Director Awil Mohamoud that the organisation exists to contribute its bit in terms of mobilising diaspora for development.



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Editing and Design: Constance Formson

Introduction and ADPC in Brief

In May 2014 the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with The Hague Academy for Local Governance (THA) and The Network University (TNU) launched a Diaspora Academy (DA). The overall objective of the DA is to upgrade and strengthen professional skills and competences of diaspora organizations in Europe engaged in improving the social and economic conditions and communal harmony in their countries of origin. Within the project capacity building for diaspora organizations focuses on three thematic area: Peacebuilding, Advocacy & Lobbying and Smart Partnerships/Networking. The project will come to an end in April 2017.

In April 2015, ADPC held the inaugural Diaspora Academy training on Lobbying and Advocacy. During the life of the project, the DA will train 30 dynamic diaspora individuals/organisations to acquire sufficient knowledge about methods and techniques of advocacy and lobby instruments and their effective application in influencing policy and practical changes conducive to their particular cause. The **19-23 October 2015** training is the second workshop of the project, and as in the previous training consisted of an equally enthusiastic, dynamic and knowledgeable group of participants. Throughout the participants positively engaged and motivated one another. Originating from a range of different African countries, and now spread out across Europe and North America, the group worked in a cohesive manner helping to add even further to the excellent training offered. The diverse nature of the group, their backgrounds and their aims gives us the hope that the training will have a far reaching positive impact on effecting positive change in their homelands.

Within this booklet we hope to showcase the full range of positive work the participants are engaged in, and how the lessons learned during the training will help to increase the effectiveness of their already excellent work.

ADPC in Brief

ADPC is a leading Diaspora think tank dedicated to mobilizing African Diaspora in Europe for the development of Africa. We conduct evidence-based, policy-related research based on diaspora perspectives, mindsets, experiences and expertise. The knowledge and information we generate is primarily targeted at three groups: diaspora organizations in Europe, development practitioners and policymakers dealing with diaspora related issues, both in Africa and in Europe. We also promote research collaboration between diaspora and homeland researchers in Africa and their affiliated institutions in the production of knowledge in this emerging research and policy field. ADPC offers high-quality capacity building training to the emerging Diaspora ministries and other institutions in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that are tasked with overseeing diaspora and development related matters.

The main purpose of the training workshop is to strengthen the policy making capacity of the diaspora-oriented policymakers, by providing them with the essential knowledge, skills and tools to develop feasible policies aimed at maximizing the contribution of the diaspora to the development of their respective home countries. We facilitate network building and linkages in and among Diaspora organizations and other stakeholders active in the field of migration and development both in the host and home countries. We do this by organizing expert meetings, conferences and workshops in which diaspora development practitioners make contact, establish viable networks, learn from each other's development- related activities, exchange valuable information, and share best practices and positive experiences in the field of diaspora and development. We also actively lobby for the access and incorporation of diaspora development practitioners in the networks of established development cooperation circles, both in host and home countries.

Participant Profiles and Stories

Alain Vital Biziiman is originally from Burundi and now lives in Sweden.

Alain is a member of Deborah Ministry Sweden which in part provides a network of support to Burundians in Sweden and the Thabita Hjälp, an association that supports the improvement of children's life in Burundi.

As an activist, Alain's expectations coming to the training were that he would become equipped with the knowledge, skills and competences with which to get his message across to a wider audience.

He expressed that he wanted to gain knowledge in order to effectively help others in Sweden and in other countries; to have the right strategies in the right place and at the right time.

He hoped that with the acquired training he would be able to have greater impact in the community he helps in Burundi and be able to secure more donor funding.



Blessing Sunday

Osuchukwu participated in the workshop on behalf of the Italian chapter of The Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation Europe (NIDOE), and his own organisation the Bless the Children Foundation. Originally from Nigeria but residing in Italy, Blessing is an architect by profession, but his interest in developing his country has also resulted in him having written various poems that are published in English and Italian. Blessing brought a calmness and sense of being to the workshop. A fellow



participant expressed that *“Blessing is a blessing for everyone around him. He is a blessing for immigrants who came to Italy. He adapts to the situation. He is ambitious and attentive.”*

Blessing has educational projects running both in Italy to integrate immigrants, and in Nigeria to educate children. He stressed that before you can do anything, you have to learn the language. Therefore they teach immigrants Italian and help them to integrate. This focus on education is also prominent in his project in Nigeria. Education in Nigeria is of poor quality. His goal is to reduce children’s illiteracy and improve youth employment. Blessing has encountered hard times at his own foundation, and NIDOE, when it comes to engaging local governments and achieving goals and objectives of various projects due to a lack of expertise in the vital area of advocacy and lobbying.

Blessing compared himself to a sponge: *“A sponge absorbs, that is what we doing here. If you add soap to the water, it adds quality, and we can clean. It can clean out bad norms we don’t want, it cleans out the society. With the harsh side you can ruin some smooth materials. There are things you have to approach with soft power and there are certain things you have to approach with harsh power.”* All the insights absorbed enable Blessing to lobby local governments and organisations for funding, as he learnt the importance of using different kinds of power.



Charles Mutitu, originally from Kenya, is the Vice Chairman of the African Diaspora Climate Justice Foundation (ADCJF) based in London.

In operation for more than 30 years, ADCJF is a voluntary research based Advocacy Global Foundation that seeks to amplify the voice of African people who suffer under the consequences of the changing climate.

The organisation's aim is to contribute towards a 'climate-friendly', 'equity-based low carbon' and 'pro-poor' sustainable development in African countries by raising awareness and

influencing policies and strategies on climate change.

Having participated in the Lobby and Advocacy workshop, Charles is motivated to strengthen ADCJF's strategy by lobbying and advocating for the implementation of a 'fair and legally binding climate change agreement' for the African continent.

He stated that it is crucial to *"be pro-active and engaged at all levels, and remember be relevant! Keep learning, keep learning, keep learning!"*

Chiemeka Peace Nwosu (ChiChi)

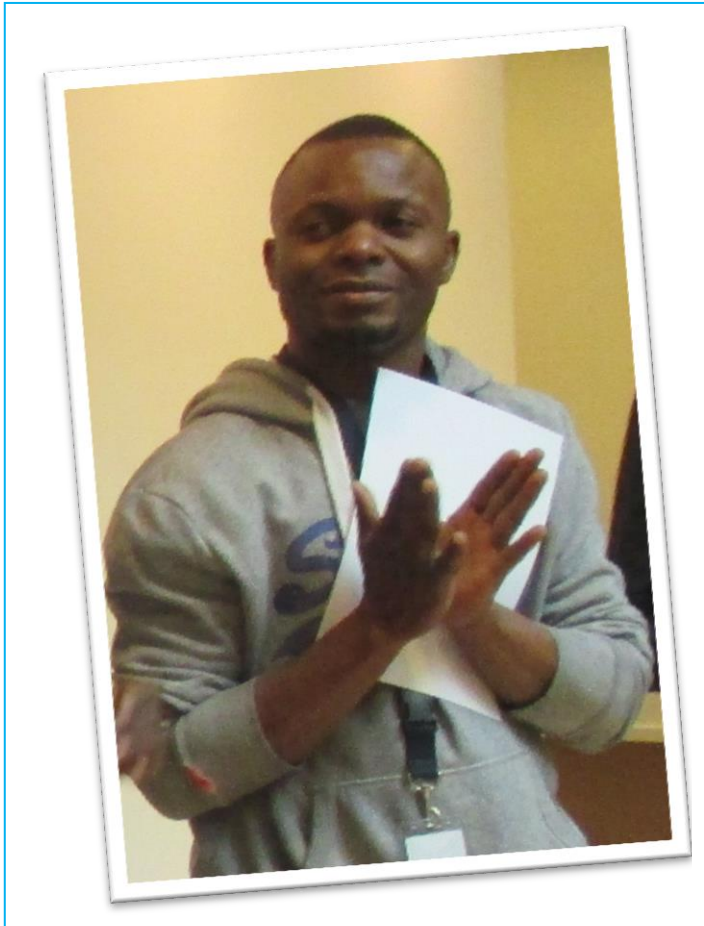
is a lawyer by profession. ChiChi has a wealth of experience in the legal profession, having been engaged in private law practice, a long career in the Energy industry, and currently working as a Consultant.

ChiChi is actively involved in gender empowerment & advocacy and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Nigeria National Council of Women Societies (Netherlands Chapter).



The Association organizes various empowerment programmes for the benefit of its members, and also strives to contribute to the wider society.

After going through the lobbying and advocacy training, ChiChi expressed that the training brought an overwhelming sense of connectivity and unity facilitated by the vision to have diaspora serve as bridge builders. She added that the training encouraged her and her fellow participants to stay motivated and energetically advance their various initiatives and projects. She is committed to putting into practice the skills acquired, and maintaining the valuable personal connections, which were created during the programme.



Denis Onyango has worked as Development Manager with the Africa Advocacy Foundation (AAF) for the past ten years. Denis participated in the workshop to *“enable the organisation to engage more effectively with other like-minded organisations and to collectively campaign for inclusivity and equality in policy planning and implementation.”*

Denis is Kenyan by birth, and Ugandan/British by nationality. He works as a consultant in the field of Public Health for several health and social care programmes in the UK.

With a focus on health, gender equality, education and poverty, AAF carries out advocacy on issues of HIV and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) that, according to Denis, have to date received insufficient attention from policy makers in the UK.

Denis expressed that *“even though AAF has a great service profile, experience and reputation involved in effective partnerships at grassroots level, we regularly find it difficult to advance some key issues that negatively impact on the lives of our beneficiaries at various levels due to lack of voice, experience and capacity in lobbying and advocacy.”*

To overcome this gap, Dennis is convinced that the lobbying and advocating techniques and skills delivered at the workshop will help him effect change.



Dorottya Patay is not a member of the African diaspora herself, however in her role as Director of Civil and Humanitarian Affairs at the African Hungarian Union she deals with prominent members of African diaspora living in Hungary. The organisation aims to support development in African countries with the help of their own resources by empowering communities and populations. The main focus is on activities in Hungary such as facilitating intercultural exchange in order to build bridges between African communities living in Hungary and the local population, by

encouraging integration while maintaining cultural heritage.

The Advocacy and Lobby workshop came at a very timely and convenient moment for Dorottya, as the organisation struggles with securing funds. Hungary, as many countries in Europe, has to cope with the large influx of migrants into the country. The advocacy and lobby skills gained through the workshop position the African Hungarian Union better in creating partnerships and acquiring funding.

Due to her background in health management in particular, Dorottya provided great insight into migrant's access to health care in Hungary. She highlighted that the current health care provided does not address all the needs of migrants. There are many immigrants in camps where there is insufficient funding medical equipment or lack doctors on camp. Upon return to Hungary Dorottya will be equipped with the right skills to lobby for more funding and hence improve the health care of migrants.

Not only did Dorottya gain advocacy and lobby competences but she also learned a valuable lesson from the other participants. She expressed that *"if you want to work with Africans, for Africans, learn their 'language'. If you want to advocate, learn the 'language' of your target group, to make sure they understand your message."*

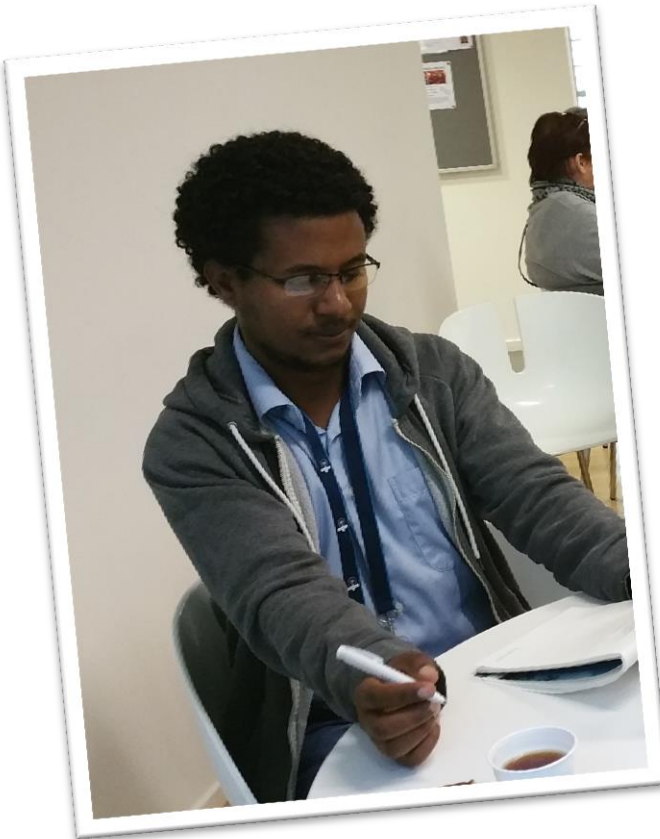


Foday Bangura is Sierra Leonean and a representative of the Belgium arm of the Sierra Leone Central Union.

The Sierra Leone Central Union (SLCU) is an umbrella organisation of 14 registered Sierra Leonean organisations in Netherlands. The union supports integration of Sierra Leoneans into host countries in Europe and supports various development projects in Sierra Leone as part of the diaspora's contribution to the development of Sierra Leone after the war.

The organisation focuses particularly on the education sector. According to

Foday it is important to mobilize more Sierra Leonean residing in Europe in order to reach a higher level on raising awareness for current issues in Sierra Leone like Ebola. For this reason it is important for the organisation to learn in a more effective way how to advocate policy makers in both the host and home countries. Foday expressed that the training was inspirational and he felt motivated to apply what he had learned with renewed hope for change.



Mathias Nigatu originates from Ethiopia and works at the Society for International Development, a platform that connects various stakeholders involved in and committed to International Development.

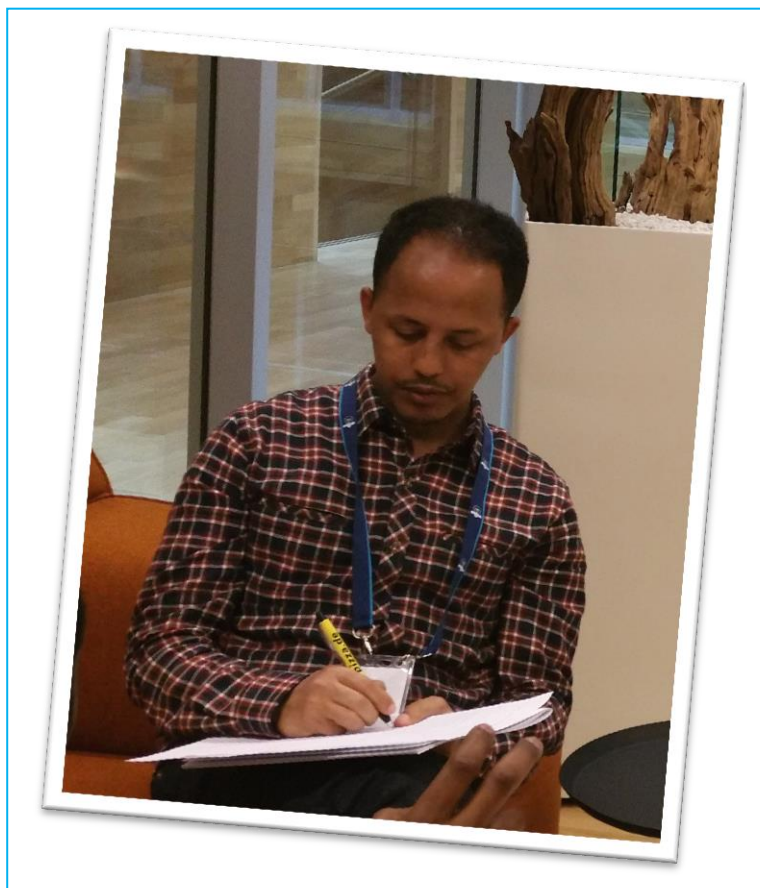
Mathias' sustainable development has not only been fostered by government officials and politicians but also by the engagement of everyone from the individual up to organisations.

Mathias studied Public Management and Policy at Addis Ababa University, and is a recent graduate in

International Development at the Erasmus University's Institute for Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague.

Mathias is motivated to transfer his new knowledge on lobbying and advocating strategies to other African partners in order to work together towards improved standards of living for people in disadvantaged situations. For Mathias the workshop was a great personal experience to meet and connect with the other participants.

Tesfaldet Okubayes is part of the Eritrean diaspora in the United Kingdom, where he is the Project Development Officer for Pastoral & Environmental Networks in the Horn of Africa (PENHA). PENHA is an organisation that strives to reduce poverty among the pastoralists in the Horn of Africa through the empowerment of communities. The organisation fosters sustainable and dignified livestock-based and non-livestock-based livelihoods.



In a letter participants wrote addressed to themselves, Tasfaldet stressed the importance of

“remembering that you are not powerless, you have your own special and unique power.” And that you have to *“be relevant for yourself and for your organisation”*.

With the various tools and group discussions in the training, Tasfaldet discovered his power and how he can use that to be relevant for himself and for PENHA.

ADPC’s Advocacy and Lobby Training had a significant and strategic relevance for PENHA. During their 25th anniversary conference in Ethiopia they have identified critical institutional gaps in Advocacy, Lobbying and Digital Campaigning to influence policies and decisions at different levels. By attending this training Tasfaldet gained valuable knowledge and skills with which to facilitate the organisation’s endeavours in lobbying, and hence influence the decisions and policies that affect diaspora communities in the UK and pastoralist communities in the Horn region.

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